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Implementation of the International Plan of Action on Ageing

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report is submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 46/91 and 46/94 of 16 December 1991. In its resolution 46/91, the Assembly decided to devote four plenary meetings, or two working days, at its forty-seventh session to an international conference on ageing to celebarate on an appropriate global scale the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the International Plan of Action on Ageing and to consider a set of targets on ageing for the year 2001. The Assembly also decided to launch a global information campaign on ageing for 1992 and beyond and adopted the United Nations Principles for Older Persons. In its resolution 46/94, the Assembly, inter alia, urged Member States to participate, at the highest level, in the plenary meetings; requested them to set national targets on ageing for the year 2001; and invited special observance of the International Day for the Elderly in 1992 (1 October).

II. AGE OF AGEING

2. By the year 2001, the world's population is expected to reach 6.3 billion and one in every 10 persons will be 60 years or older. In developed regions, where population ageing has been observed for several decades, that figure will be close to one in five. In many developing countries, the process of population ageing has also started, while the expected sharp decline in fertility in others will mean that the population of these countries too will begin to age. The "age of global ageing" will have set in.

3. The survival of more infants and children into adulthood and maturity reflects progress in many areas of the human condition. A greater number of active older persons represents a resource, although the need for care and protection of a growing number of the very old, or frail old, will also constitute a challenge to future societies. At the same time, the radical changes in age structures that are foreseen will set in motion other changes, affecting both the life of the individual and the patterns of society. This is already evident in developed regions. Attitudes and policies will adjust, or need to be adjusted, to meet new needs and resolve new problems.

4. In 1991 the General Assembly responded to the challenge by adopting United Nations Principles for Older Persons (see General Assembly resolution 46/91, annex). In 1992, the Assembly will devote four special meetings of the plenary to an international conference on ageing (15-16 October), during which it will observe the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the International Plan of Action on Ageing and consider how best to enable older persons to lead full and productive lives contributing to the community and, in general, to improve the quality of their life.

5. Future-oriented debates, as well as efforts to dispel some myths about ageing, have prevailed throughout the anniversary year. Some debated topics are summarized below, in order to help outline the onset of "the age of global ageing".

A. Squaring the pyramid

6. "Squaring the pyramid", a term used to express the transformation of population structures, began in developed countries decades ago and has evolved in developing countries in recent years, almost unnoticed. As the population pyramid is squared, or more accurately, takes on the shape of a rectangle, it signifies a decrease in the numbers of the young at the base or an increase in the numbers of the old at the apex. Both the narrowing of the base and the widening of the apex have been occurring simultaneously in many countries.

7. As indicated earlier, changes in population structure set off chain reactions in other long established structures. With ageing populations, education, once the province of youth, becomes a life-long necessity. Established employment practices need revision as labour forces shrink and the numbers of dependent older persons increase. Health services developed to ensure the survival of children will need to be complemented by services to ensure the well-being of the very old. Policies will need to reflect changing family structures where the large extended family is gradually being replaced by the narrow "beanpole family" of four and five small generations.

8. As well as causing a domino-like series of structural changes in society, ageing provokes rethinking about the individual life cycle, especially the need to plan for a long future through better savings, housing, training and intergenerational cooperation.

9. Changing population age structures and the squaring of the population pyramid has been explained in detail in the report of the United Nations entitled World Population Monitoring 1991 1/ with special emphasis on age structure; it has been summarized in a concise version of the report (ST/ESA/SER.A/124).

B. Myths challenged

10. Two myths have been examined extensively during the anniversary year. First, that the ageing of populations is a concern of developed countries only. Second, that ageing is a concern of older people mainly and of little significance to younger age groups.

11. Ageing is, certainly, a vital issue in developed countries. Difficulties arise because of declining labour forces and increasing costs of care and pension systems. Some predict that a shrinking labour force will gain for itself new bargaining power to secure better conditions and pay at the expense of pension entitlements and social services of retirees. Conversely, the rising numbers of retirees, if trends continue, will increase their political power and claims for adequate pensions, social services and health care. Thus, worker-pensioner conflicts are predicted, unless policy adjustments are made. Proposed adjustments include expanding the labour force and decreasing old age dependency costs, by such measures as (a) introducing flexible working

arrangements to enable more older people and women to join the work force; (b) increasing the numbers of young immigrants; (c) increasing individual preparations for old age, including life-long education, job retraining, healthy life-styles, savings and security of family and community ties.

12. The policy implications of ageing in developing countries are not immediately obvious. If the concern is care and protection, the problem seems to lie mainly in the future. However, each successive cohort of older persons - today's 40-, 30- and 20-years-olds - will live out its old age in the early decades of the next century in ever-declining ratios of young to old. This will occur at a time when traditional family structures are expected to be weakened by urban and international migrations, and when women's increasing levels of education and participation in public life are likely to take them beyond the confines of traditional housekeeping and caregiving. Thus, old age supports in the next decades will clearly be different from what they are today or were in the past.

13. Because of the cost, support structures for old age in developing countries will probably take a different path from the welfare approach widely adopted in developed countries. Yet some argue otherwise. They claim that if the population explosion is to be contained, and its constraint on development curbed, considerable public welfare and security measures must be provided to parents before they forego the security traditionally obtained in the large family. What measures, and how they will be financed, is a major question. Meanwhile, many development agents urge that developing countries give priority attention to expanding self-help opportunities for older persons.

14. Public welfare and self-help approaches need not exclude each other. Immediately, however, opportunities for self-help may be the surest way to help today's population of older persons in developing countries. Older persons in developing countries generally work into very old age on farms, in the market place, in craft shops, in housekeeping and in gardening. They can be supported in these tasks through skills-upgrading, improved tools, credit facilities and cooperatives. Development plans and programmes should include a component for older persons. The formal and informal sectors have different but complementary roles to play in adjusting to the ageing of societies.

15. If, over the longer term, independent and productive older persons are to make their contribution to society and its development, the resources invested in people over the entire life-cycle may be considered also as an integral part of policy in response to population ageing.

C. Ageing, youth, families

16. The second myth to be challenged during the anniversary year is that ageing concerns older people only, or mainly. The old are a minority, but one that most people will join. Different cohorts or generations will arrive at old age with different experiences and expectations. Social, economic and spiritual well-being in old age have their beginnings in early life. A life-

cycle approach is being encouraged throughout the anniversary year. A unified vision of the life-cycle invokes a unified vision of the individual in his or her family and society: continuity over time and across relationships. Children of today increasingly have not only parents and grandparents but great-grandparents and even great-great-grandparents. The vertically extended family gives an experience of longevity.

17. In yet another sense, ageing is not only for the old. Caregivers are profoundly affected by the increase in numbers of the frail old, mainly found among those 80 years and above, the fastest expanding population group. Dementia, incontinence, loss of hearing and vision, hip fractures, and other disabilities frequently diminish the ability of the very old to function effectively in daily life - sometimes demanding care 24 hours a day and 365 days a year. As the care-giving burden grows, family caregivers decline in numbers, both because of a changing ratio in older and middle aged populations and because more women, the traditional caregivers, are entering public life and the paid workforce. In many places, a "mix" of caregivers and services is being developed so that the burden is shared.

18. If new caregiving strategies are not developed, two current trends will conflict: (a) the increasing numbers of frail old persons needing family and community care and (b) the diminishing pool of traditional family caregivers.

19. Various responses have been urged: (a) better financed and coordinated community care; (b) collaborative care-giving by all family members; (c) age-care facilities attached to the workplace, similar to child-care facilities; (d) pension credits for family members who devote substantial time to caring for older members, (e) caregivers benefits analogous to veteran's benefits, and (e) a systematic community-wide attempt to promote a caring society.

III. INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON AGEING

20. The four special meetings of the plenary of the General Assembly being devoted to an international conference on ageing, offer an opportunity for examining, in a highly visible global forum, the impact of ageing on national life, infrastructure and spending, and for affirming commitment to international and multisectoral collaboration on ageing in the decade ahead.

21. The President of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General will officiate at the opening ceremony. This would tentatively be followed by a short adjournment for a non-governmental briefing on collaborative strategies for the next decade. The ensuing plenary debate is expected to focus on future strategies, especially for improving the flow of information, expertise, technologies and resources.

22. The Conference will take place against a background of anniversary events including: (a) the award of testimonials for outstanding efforts in implementing the Plan of Action; (b) the distribution of an information kit on

ageing; (c) issue of a special cancellation stamp from 1 October until 30 November for the International Day for the Elderly; and (d) an exhibit on ageing and older persons at United Nations Headquarters. The events were prepared through cooperation by Member States, the United Nations Secretariat and the non-governmental community.

23. The Conference will be preceded by a three-day non-governmental forum in and around United Nations Headquarters from 30 September until 2 October, in observance of the International Day for the Elderly, 1 October.

IV. OTHER ANNIVERSARY EVENTS

24. The high point of the anniversary year will be the International Conference on Ageing mentioned above. The many other activities are summarized below in two themes: the International Day for the Elderly, and a global information campaign on ageing.

A. International Day for the Elderly

25. The International Day for the Elderly, 1 October, is being observed for the second time this year. Celebrations include a three-day forum in and around United Nations Headquarters New York, from 30 September to 2 October. The three-day event is being organized by the New York non-governmental organizations' committee on ageing, in cooperation with the Department of Public Information, the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs and other bodies of the Secretariat. On 30 September, Ambassadors from four continents are scheduled to make keynote statements on ageing. Experts will address the topics of ageing as it relates to development, economic security, health, environment, women and the family. Non-governmental organizations will present their targets for the next decade.

26. The forum is scheduled to continue on 1 October at United Nations Headquarters by addressing the theme "Humanity comes of age". United Nations staff will speak on policy formulation, population, statistics, technical cooperation, training and regional programmes on ageing. Representatives of leading non-governmental organizations will debate the topic "Tapping the resource". A reception with music by a seniors chamber orchestra is planned for the evening of 1 October.

27. On 2 October, the forum is scheduled to continue with a day-long multi-cultural festival on ageing in New York City under the theme "Ageing in action". The festival is being sponsored by the New York City Department of the Ageing and will feature ethnic crafts, dancing, choirs, food and information exhibits.

28. The United Nations Office at Vienna will mark the International Day for the Elderly with a seminar, organized by the Vienna-based committee on ageing of non-governmental organizations, in cooperation with the Centre for Social

Development and Humanitarian Affairs. Participants will include representatives of Member States, national and city officials of Austria, international and Austrian experts and representatives of older persons. The seminar will examine future-oriented strategies for integrating older persons, for improving intergenerational solidarity and for establishing effective care systems.

29. A choir of older persons will sing at the Vienna International Centre on 1 October. Children from international schools at Vienna will exhibit drawings of their grandparents. An exhibit on international cooperation on ageing will be held, also at the Vienna International Centre, organized jointly by the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs and the Committee on Ageing.

30. The United Nations Postal Administration plans to introduce a special cancellation stamp from 1 October until 30 November 1992 with the words "Internatinal Day for the Elderly". Meanwhile, the Administration is organizing an international design competition in 1992 for a suitable stamp on ageing to be launched in 1993.

31. Events around the world planned for "E-Day" 1992 include: press, radio and television programmes, a technical design competition, award ceremonies, intergenerational picnics and walkathons, fund-raising sales and dinners, as well as symposia on many different themes.

32. Reports on the first observance of the International Day in 1991 were given in two issues of the Bulletin on Ageing (Nos. 3/1991 and 1/1992). Nineteen developing and 14 developed countries reported their observance of the day to the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs; many more are thought to have organized events. In India, to cite an example, the President, the Prime Minister, and the Ministers of Agriculture and of Defence have issued statements in observance of the Day. Similarly, the President of Sri Lanka, as well as the Prime Minister and the Minister of Reconstruction, Rehabilitation and Social Welfare, issued statements. Heads of six United Nations agencies or bodies issued statements on the Day. The Secretary-General's message on the Day was also widely distributed.

33. To promote the Day in the next three years, and relate its activities to major United Nations conferences or events, the following themes are being considered. For 1993, (a) human rights of older people and (b) indigenous knowledge and skills of older persons. These topics could relate observance of the Day with the United Nations World Conference on Human Rights and the International Year for the World's Indigenous People, both taking place in 1993. For 1994, (a) population ageing and development and (b) ageing and the family - relating to the United Nations International Conference on Population and Development, and the International Year of the Family, both taking place in 1994. For 1995, two suitable themes would be: (a) older women and (b) intergenerational solidarity - in view of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the tenth anniversary of the International Youth Year.

B. Information campaign

34. An information campaign on ageing for 1992 and beyond was organized in two stages, first by the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs and secondly by the Department of Public Information. The Centre launched the campaign with its first issue of the Bulletin on Ageing in 1991. It followed up with a global announcement on the first International Day for the Elderly (1 October 1991). It prepared a briefing entitled "A Day, a year and a decade for ageing", for distribution throughout 1992. The briefing explains the International Day, the anniversary year 1992 and target-setting for the year 2001. It includes the text of the United Nations Principles for Older Persons. It suggests a variety of projects for the community or local level, including 13 for neighbourhoods and families; 12 for the business sector; seven for schools and colleges, and six for the media.

35. The Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs collaborated with "redisseminators" to achieve maximum coverage for its campaign at little cost. The redisseminators were selected for their outreach to diverse special interest groups worldwide. For example, the announcement was reprinted by the United Nations Population Division, thereby reaching population specialists. HelpAge International highlighted selected activities in its ageACTION newsletter, reaching development-oriented associations throughout the developing world. The European Federation for the Welfare of the Elderly republished the announcement in its newsletter, reaching specialists in ageing throughout eastern and western Europe. The World Leisure and Recreation Association devoted its spring 1992 magazine to ageing. The International Council of Nurses prepared a excellent kit on Healthy Ageing, which it distributed among national member associations in 106 countries. The International Federation of Associations of the Elderly responded by establishing special "1992 Committees" to promote the anniversary year among its extensive membership.

36. Announcements about the anniversary year were made by United Nations specialized agencies and by the International Institute on Ageing at Malta in its quarterly journal BOLD. Publications issued for the anniversary year by United Nations specialized agencies and bodies are mentioned below in section V. C and D where, inter alia, the World Ageing Situation 1991 2/ report is introduced.

37. Three posters on ageing were produced depicting the United Nations Principles for Older Persons, the themes of participation and care, and the International Day for the Elderly. The Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs collaborated in producing the posters with the International Federation on Ageing, the China National Committee on Ageing and the European Exchange Centre on Gerontology.

38. Many conferences in 1991 and 1992 served to promote the anniversary year, and to obtain contributions to target-setting. The Bulletin on Ageing, No. 1, 1992, contains a calendar of international events on ageing. As lead agency for promoting the anniversary year, the Centre for Social Development and

Humanitarian Affairs was invited to participate in the following conferences in 1992 to explain United Nations initiatives for the anniversary year and for the decade ahead: "Changing families in changing societies", organized by the International Council of Women at Brussels from 8 to 10 February; "Prospects in Aging", organized by the Sandoz Foundation for Gerontological Research at Basle, Switzerland, from 15 to 18 March; "Together today for tomorrow", organized by the Minister of State for Seniors, Canada, in cooperation with the International Federation on Ageing and One Voice - the Canadian Seniors Network at Vancouver, Canada, from 21 to 22 April; "The quality of life of the elderly in a United Europe", organized by the European Federation for the Welfare of the Elderly at Bratislava, Czechoslovakia, from 23 to 24 April 1992; "Growing together: living and learning: an intergenerational conference", organized by the Ministries of Citizenship and Education, Canada at Toronto, Canada, from 1 to 3 June; "United Nations targets on ageing", organized by the International Federation on Ageing on 19 July during the "World Assembly 1992: Improving the Human Condition" at Washington, United States of America, from 18 to 24 July.

39. Conferences being devoted to the anniversary year and/or to setting targets in cooperation with the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs include: "New Century, New Hopes, New Thinking: Global Conference on Ageing", organized by the International Federation on Ageing at Bombay, on 30 and 31 August and at Pune, India, from 1 to 3 September; "Workshop on Social Aspects of Ageing", organized by the International Federation on Ageing during the International Conference on Population Aging organized by the San Diego State University, United States of America, from 17 to 19 September; "Symposium marking the International Day for the Elderly and the tenth anniversary of the World Assembly on Ageing", organized by the International Federation of Associations of Elderly Persons at Barcelona, Spain, from 1 to 5 October; and a seminar on age care in countries of central and eastern Europe supported by the Government of Germany. The Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs is cooperating in convening all of the above conferences.

40. The Department of Public Information of the Secretariat launched the second stage of the information campaign in September 1992 with a professional media kit on ageing for distribution to Member States, the press and non-governmental organizations. The kit's eight features are being distributed globally through the United Nations information centres to national television and radio stations and newspapers. Radio and television programmes are being prepared as well as public service announcements. A travelling exhibition on ageing is being prepared for initial display at New York Headquarters and, subsequently, at other locations.

41. The Department is organizing, together with the City of New York's Department of the Ageing and non-governmental organizations, a three-day forum from 30 September to 2 October, on the occasion of the International Day for the Elderly.

42. The Department's initiatives strive to alert the general public to the need for life-long preparation for ageing through income-security measures, continuing education, healthy living and intergenerational cooperation. Both the participation and care needs of older persons are featured. The history and functioning of the United Nations programme on ageing are explained. The global impact of this second stage of the campaign can be partially measured by the number of press clippings returned and announcements reported but the real impact will be more difficult to assess: the extent to which individuals understand and respond to their own ageing and the ageing of their societies.

43. The United Nations information campaign was able to build on earlier mainly national initiatives, such as the promotional booklet entitled "Planning events: tips for seniors", issued in Canada in 1988 by the Ontario Office for Senior Citizens' Affairs and several ongoing campaigns by non-governmental organizations such as the "Coming of Age" multisectoral campaign in the United Kingdom; the "Ageing is Growing" intergenerational campaign in Sweden and the "Age and Opportunity" yearly event in Ireland. It was the impetus behind a major celebration and fund-raising initiative being planned by DaneAge Foundation which, as sponsors are found, will include musical events at Bangkok, Copenhagen, Harare, London, Moscow and New York as well as the possible production of a film and records. Proceeds will be devoted to helping older people help themselves, particularly in developing countries.

44. Thus, while national campaigns were the basis of the international campaign, the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs is receiving reports that the international campaign has, in turn, stimulated many national observances. The symbiosis of national and international events is nicely evident.

45. While the anniversary year 1992 has been mostly an occasion for celebrating age and for making practical plans for the years ahead, in certain places the observance has been bleak. Where there is armed conflict, famine and extreme poverty, little attention can be given to the question of ageing and the particular needs of growing old. General peace and development are prerequisites of effective ageing policies and programmes.

46. A number of organizations of older persons address themselves to peace issues, notably the Grey Panthers and the International Senior Citizens Associations (ISCA). The Grey Panthers joined forces with youth organizations in protesting the manufacture of war toys for children. ISCA was established to promote world betterment, but has recently made its goals more specific, including, inter alia, the pursuit of peace, protection of the environment, and human rights.

V. YEAR OF DEPARTURE

47. The anniversary year 1992 has served to make ageing an issue of wide public debate: it has been a year of arrival, but more importantly, it is one of departure.

A. Setting targets

48. Focusing on the future, a draft set of eight global targets on ageing for the year 2001 was developed collaboratively (see A/47/339). The targets constitute a practical strategy for the next decade.

49. The draft targets are intended to guide a wide range of resources, agencies and activities towards: supporting more national and community activities on ageing; integrating ageing into mainstream development and the major events of the decade; harmonizing research and establishing an international senior volunteer corps for peace and development; and improving cost-effectiveness of United Nations sytem-wide activities and those of non-governmental organizations.

50. During target-setting discussions, some contributors favoured a macro-planning approach; others favoured a micro-pragmatic response. Some wished to see priority given to helping older persons to be active contributors to society, while others wanted scarce resources to be allocated towards establishing an effective care system for the frail elderly. Clearly, all approaches are valid; priority will depend on local or national circumstances.

51. Through the target-setting discussions, it became evident that the global programme on ageing had evolved in the past decade to a point where it required a broad, flexible and multi-faceted approach for the future to accommodate the diverse agencies active in the field. The consultative approach taken in setting the targets established a good basis for continuing cooperation. That will, however, give rise to a need for improved mechanisms of coordination.

52. Exploratory consultations have begun with interested Member States and non-governmental organizations on improving international and multisectoral coordination among the many players active in the global programme on ageing.

53. At the national level, a mix of players and approaches to ageing is also evident. New levels of cooperation between the formal and informal sectors are emerging in many places. Cooperation between Government, professional, business and voluntary agencies is giving rise to a "welfare mix", with older persons increasingly active in advisory and self-help roles. The report of the Secretary-General on global targets on ageing for the year 2001 contains a section entitled "Short Guide for setting national targets on ageing" (see A/47/339, sect. IV).

B. Timetable

54. The timetable for the decade ahead shows a well-established infrastructure and opportunities for continuing assessment of the target strategies. In uneven years, the General Assembly will debate the question of ageing and United Nations inter-agency meetings on ageing will be

convened. Quadrennially, in 1993, 1997 and 2001, the Commission for Social Development will review implementation of the Plan of Action and in the same years, world congresses on gerontology will take place. The third World Ageing Situation report is to be issued in 1997. A number of other conferences and surveys are scheduled around the above core activities.

55. The second decade of the Plan of Action opens with new instruments: the proposed global targets on ageing for the year 2001, as well as the United Nations Principles for Older Persons. It opens with new institutions: the Banyan Fund Association: A World Fund for Ageing; the International Institute on Ageing in Malta; and the African Gerontological Society. And it opens with new opportunities for integrating ageing into selected major events and conferences of the decade ahead.

56. The year 1993 will be critical for ensuring that the momentum gained in 1992 is not lost. It will open with the third review of the implementation of the Plan of Action at the thirty-third session of the Commission for Social Development at Vienna. The Commission's findings will be transmitted through the Economic and Social Council to the General Assembly. The fifth ad hoc inter-agency meeting on ageing will take place after the Commission, also at Vienna. The World Congress of Gerontology organized by the International Association of Gerontology will take place at Budapest from 4 to 9 July, with participation by the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs. The Centre will inform participants, customarily several thousand experts, of the findings of the third review of the implementation of the Plan of Action and it will explore avenues of cooperation with interested experts in reaching selected global targets on ageing for the year 2001.

C. Regional progress

57. Notable regional features in the response to ageing at this time are: expansion of activities in Asia and the Pacific; a new initiative in Western Asia; several independent initiatives in Latin America and the Caribbean and the establishment of the African Gerontological Society. In the European region, major studies continue and many countries will observe the European Year of the Elderly and Solidarity between the Generations in 1993. In North America, innumerable studies and promotional activities are under way in Government offices, universities, organizations of older persons, corporations and associations. Illustrative examples of current activities of the United Nations regional offices, as well as selected other activities are given below.

58. Regional strategies and targets for the decade ahead can benefit from the extensive regional studies carried out recently for the second review of the implementation of the Plan of Action supported by the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Trust Fund for Ageing. Meetings for setting regional and national targets are under consideration; the China National Committee on Ageing has offered to assist in the target-setting process at regional and national levels as mentioned below.

59. Africa is projected to be the last region to age. Governments and families are none the less facing an ageing challenge brought on by mass migrations of youth and middle-aged populations, fleeing natural disasters, war and the poverty of rural areas. Older persons tend to remain behind or, if moved, to become vulnerable. Where AIDS is widespread, many older people are caring for their affected children and rearing their grandchildren. To respond to the current situation and to prepare for the ageing of the population that will become acute in the next century, the African Gerontological Society was established.

60. The African Gerontological Society, which was set up in 1989, is a voluntary association of interested people and organizations concerned with ageing in the African region. It aims to (a) promote regional awareness with respect to ageing; (b) initiate and assist African Governments and non-governmental organizations in developing services for the ageing; (c) initiate and assist African universities and other learning institutions to develop curricula and training schemes with respect to ageing; (d) establish links between research and policy formulation; (e) cooperate with the International Association of Gerontology and its member organizations in pursuit of the foregoing aims and objectives; and (f) raise funds in support of the foregoing aims and objectives.

61. In response to the General Assembly's requests for assistance to the African Gerontological Society (most recently in Assembly resolution 46/94), several international entities are developing programmes or projects with the Society. Through these efforts, the President of the Society participated in the expert group meeting on setting targets on ageing for the year 2001, held at Vienna from 23 to 26 March 1992. The Vice-President of the Society participated in the second European Congress of Gerontology, Madrid, from 11 to 14 September 1991. The Society is requesting assistance from the United Nations Trust Fund for Ageing to become operational, expand its membership and engage in fund-raising. Assisted by HelpAge International and the American Association of Retired Persons, the Society will participate in the research now underway at the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs on the developmental implications of demographic change: global population ageing. The International Institute on Ageing at Malta plans to organize a conference in cooperation with the Society in preparation for the XV World Congress of Gerontology at Budapest, Hungary. Efforts will continue to support the Society in the context of reaching the global targets set for the year 2001.

62. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) will organize in 1993 a seminar of 15 experts on the Situation and Prospects of Ageing and the Development of Policies and Programmes for the Elderly, with Special Emphasis on Social Security Systems. The seminar will examine: (a) ageing demographic trends; (b) social protection and social security systems in countries of the region; (c) discrepancies between present services of future needs; (d) United Nations activities in the field of ageing, including the conclusions of the Third Review and Appraisal of the implementation of the International Plan of Action on Ageing, and (e) strategies for establishing

new policies and programmes on ageing in the region, including regional targets for the next decade. The seminar is expected to point the way towards policies and programmes that will effectively integrate older people in development.

63. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) plans to begin a series of steps in 1992 supporting the development of comprehensive national policies on ageing. First, data will be collected through a researchers meeting, country studies on the socio-economic situation of older persons, an annotated bibliography of policies and programmes pertaining to ageing and statistical data. A synthesis will be made of the data collected. An expert meeting will be convened to review the synthesis. A model comprehensive national policy on ageing will be drafted and senior officials from 16 countries of the region will convene to examine the model.

64. ESCAP is supporting local-level policy development. It will launch a project before the end of 1992 to establish a dialogue between older persons and local policy makers, identify local ageing issues, and formulate model policies and programmes that local authorities and non-governmental organizations can implement to absorb elderly persons into development work. Six countries of the South Asian and South-East Asia subregions are expected to participate in the project.

65. A Roundtable on the Ageing of Asian Populations was held at ESCAP Headquarters, Bangkok, from 4 to 6 May 1992. Ageing was on the agenda of recent high-level meetings such as the Fourth Asian and Pacific Ministerial Conference on Social Welfare and Social Development, and the Fourth Asian and Pacific Population Conference.

66. Regional activities of non-governmental organizations are increasing in Asia and the Pacific and include the recent establishment of an Asia Training Centre on Ageing at the Chiang Mai University in Thailand.

67. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) produced a study in 1989 entitled "The elderly in Latin America: a strategic sector for social policy in the 1990s", which was funded by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). The study acknowledged several independent initiatives in the region, but stressed the need for better regional coordination. The Pan-American Health Organization is concentrating on improving coordination between developed and developing countries of the region in planning and programming for ageing.

68. The Population Activities Unit of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), with the financial assistance of UNFPA, has undertaken policy-relevant research on the socio-economic implications of population ageing in the ECE region. It will publish its findings in two volumes provisionally entitled "Population Ageing in Europe and North America". Part I will address demographic causes and economic consequences. Part II will focus on social aspects and national histories.

69. The ECE secretariat recently began implementing a new four-year project entitled "The Dynamics of Population Ageing in Countries of the ECE Region", assisted by UNFPA. The project will assess the socio-economic conditions of the older population in eastern and central Europe, and make some comparisons with countries of western Europe and North America. Country reports and cross-national comparative studies on the conditions of the elderly will be prepared on the basis of microdata samples drawn from the most recent population and housing censuses of selected ECE member countries. Samples will contain households with at least one elderly person as the sampling unit and will consist of gender-specific cross-nationally comparable information at individual and household-levels. Workshops will be held to train participants from eastern and central Europe in designing and drawing microdata census samples, and in conducting policy-relevant research on the conditions of older persons.

70. The European Regional Office of the World Health Organization (WHO) has been focusing special attention on self-care and healthy ageing. In 1992, it launched a series of self-care guides for healthy ageing for use by individuals and families and to assist professionals in counselling patients. Having published six guides in 1992, the Office plans to issue another six in the near future.

71. The countries of the European Economic Community will observe 1993 as the European Year of the Elderly and Intergenerational Solidarity. The Year is intended to encourage the exchange of studies and research; the convening of conferences, seminars and meetings, and the launch of innovative projects and awareness-raising campaigns. Three structures have been established to guide activities: an advisory committee composed of two governmental representatives from each Member State which meets every four months; a monitoring group or "observatory" composed of 12 scientific experts from around Europe who report on the social and economic situation of older people in the region; and a liaison group comprising non-governmental organizations which work for the elderly. Promotional events for the Year include: conferences, festivals, theatre, games, exhibitions, competitions, and a European "seniors parliament".

D. Expertise

72. The many studies, surveys and conferences mentioned above signify a groundswell of expertise on ageing at this time, especially in developed countries, less so in developing countries. Closing the gap between research and policy formulation is everywhere a continuing challenge and an underlying objective of the global targets on ageing for the year 2001.

73. The World Ageing Situation 1991 addresses the question of policy formulation in developing countries. Mandated for publication every six years (General Assembly resolution 41/96 of 4 December 1986), the 1991 report departs from the broad scope of the first such report issued in 1985. It focuses on eight key issues: responding to changing work opportunities in old

age; determining the appropriate mix of income security programmes; social and economic support to older people without families; family supports and the elderly; the special problems of older women; combating the calamity of blindness with age; housing for the elderly, and developing an infrastructure for ageing. In each case, the situation is described, research findings cited and policy options presented. The general discussion is followed by country examples. The report will serve as the principle United Nations publication on ageing until the third such report is issued in 1997.

74. The first phase of the ongoing research of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs entitled "Developmental implications of demographic change: global population ageing" is now completed. The data from sample surveys of the elderly in Chile, the Dominican Republic, Sri Lanka and Thailand are being analysed, and preliminary results will be presented at two international conferences on ageing at Bombay, India and in San Diego, United States of America.

75. This research is the first interregional attempt to identify the actual roles, relationships and contributions of older persons to families and communities in developing countries. When all phases are completed, the research should clarify the conditions and potential of older persons in their families and communities in a cross-national framework. It should determine the salience for developing countries of indicators commonly used in developed countries. It may identify alternative indicators. It should help developing country planners in formulating appropriate programmes and projects since much of the experience of developed countries in ageing cannot be replicated in developing countries.

76. The project is funded by UNFPA, with co-financing by HelpAge International, the American Association of Retired Persons and SSM Bridges International. The Swedish Government has provided a major contribution for the second phase of the research which will survey the elderly in the African and West Asian regions.

77. The United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) is preparing a study entitled "Guidelines for improving the housing and living conditions of the elderly and the disabled in human settlements management and development". The United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women is examinining methodologies for improving the compilation and analysis of data on older women.

78. WHO continues its global research programme on dementias, osteoporosis, immunological changes and successful ageing. Better understanding of factors contributing to healthy ageing and, conversely, to age-related diseases, will help future generations to "add life to years". WHO continues to assist Member States in developing national health care programmes, improving curricula for health-care training and medical studies on ageing, and in providing comprehensive community and institutional care for frail older persons.

79. The International Labour Organisation is preparing a study on "Older workers: conditions of work and transition to retirement" for publication in 1993. To mark the anniversary year, it issued two publications: The ILO and the Elderly 3/ and Training for Older People: A Handbook. 4/ These are but three highlights of ILO's continuing focus on older workers and its cooperation with the International Social Security Association in developing alternative social security systems for developing countries.

80. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization is continuing is work on retirement preparation as well as curriculum development and student participation at Third Age Universities.

81. Training initiatives of the International Institute on Ageing address the needs of policy-makers, professionals and volunteers in developing countries, including through three short-term yearly courses and a long-term degree course in gerontology. The Institute is carrying out a number of research projects, including a policy-oriented four-year project in China. It is collaborating with WHO in its research on dementia. It publishes scientific papers, monographs on ageing and a quarterly journal "BOLD". The Institute works closely with the specialized agencies and bodies of the United Nations system, as well as with 24 collaborating non-governmental institutes or organizations. It exchanges information with 124 organizations in 52 countries.

82. Translating demographic projections into societal changes and related budgetary adjustments remains a central challenge to national planning offices - and becomes a focus of attention as the international community prepares for the 1994 Conference on Population and Development. Two publications will be especially helpful in preparing input on ageing to the 1994 Population Conference: (a) The United Nations World Population Monitoring 1991 (ST/ESA/SER.A/126), focusing on age structures; and (b) the Special Issue on Population Ageing and the Situation of Elderly Persons, to be issued in 1993 as an adjunct to the 1991 Demographic Yearbook. The publications are the work of the Population Division and the Statistical Office, respectively, of the Department of Economic and Social Development.

83. An International Conference on Population Ageing, organized by the San Diego State University from 17 to 19 September 1992, will also make an important contribution to the 1994 Conference on Population and Development. The 1992 San Diego Conference is being co-organized by the United Nations Population Division with the active participation of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs and support of five United Nations specialized agencies or bodies and 21 non-governmental organizations. Participants include policy makers, planners and scholars who will examine the implications of population ageing in all world regions. The conclusions and recommendations emanating from the Conference will be submitted to the United Nations Secretariat as a contribution to the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the International Plan of Action on Ageing in 1992, the International Year of the Family in 1994 and the International Conference on Population and Development, 1994.

E. Cooperation

84. As a forerunner of other possible partnerships for reaching selected targets, the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs developed a programme of cooperation with HelpAge International in 1991 and with the China National Committee on Ageing in 1992. It cooperated with the American Association of Retired Persons in 1991. Partnerships of this nature are an important adjunct to the regular United Nations programme on ageing, permitting levels of outreach and expertise otherwise unobtainable in the programme at this time.

85. HelpAge International was conducting over 200 projects on ageing in developing countries in 1991. As a result, a seminar is planned for representatives of Governments and non-governmental organizations from developing countries in preparing quality proposals to the Trust Fund for Ageing. Another seminar, held at Vienna from 15 to 17 July 1991, assisted Government and non-governmental representatives from central and eastern Europe in developing practical strategies on ageing. HelpAge International organized the meeting in cooperation with the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs and continued after the meeting to provide advisory services to the participants.

86. The Government of Germany has offered to support a seminar for representatives of Governments and non-governmental organizations from central and eastern Europe, tentatively scheduled to take place at Vienna in November 1992, as a contribution to the anniversary year. HelpAge International has offered to co-fund the meeting. The proposed November 1992 meeting would serve to consolidate the practical experiences on ageing gained from the July 1991 meeting.

87. A programme of cooperation between the Centre and the China National Committee on Ageing began in May 1992 and encompasses ongoing exchange of information and advisory services. It also envisages the organizaton of two expert group meetings in China. One, on setting regional targets on ageing for the year 2001, tentatively at Beijing in the last quarter of 1993. The other, at a date to be determined, on setting national targets in education for and by older persons.

88. The Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs cooperated with the American Association of Retired Persons in convening an expert group meeting on the integration of older women in development, at Vienna from 7 to 11 October 1991. The conclusions and recommendations of the meeting were submitted to the Commission on the Status of Women at its thirty-sixth session. The Commission, in its resolution 36/4, invited concerned agencies to take a number of specific measures on behalf of older women, such as including them in development strategies and programmes.

89. The Commission, in the same resolution, invited the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference on Human Rights, 1993, to include discrimination on grounds of age and sex in its agenda. It invited the Preparatory Committee

for the International Conference on Population and Development, 1994, to include in its agenda the situation of elderly women and their integration in development. The Commission also invited the Secretary-General to report to its thirty-eight session on the inclusion of gender criteria in numerical targets concerning ageing then being prepared by the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs.

F. Resources

90. While ageing is a sign of development and an enrichment of society in many ways, making a successful adjustment of national policies and programmes from a youthful to a more aged population requires an initial investment of human and financial resources. The United Nations Trust Fund for Ageing and the Banyan Fund Association: A World Fund for Ageing are two vehicles for mobilizing and channelling resources for ageing in developing countries. The Trust Fund for Ageing began the year 1992 with an estimated balance of US$ 203,646. During the 1991 pledging conference for United Nations operational activities, US$ 43,237 was pledged. Unless further contributions are received, it will not be possible to meet all the requests received from developing countries for assistance.

91. In 1991, the Fund supported nine projects worth a total of $94,000. Of these, four were in Africa, one in Latin America and the remainder were interregional or global. The projects in Africa included assistance to the nascent African Gerontological Society in developing its networks and promoting its objectives; assistance to the Panos Institute in producing a publication on oral histories from the Sahel entitled At the Desert's Edge; assistance to the University of Benin, Nigeria in convening a seminar on pre-retirement education; and assistance for the third phase of a project on helping the aged in Uganda, in cooperation with the Anglican Church of Uganda. This phase of the Uganda project is being marked by the official opening of an Old People's Home, together with its adjacent self-supporting farm, early in October 1992, in connection with the International Day for the Elderly (1 October). The Uganda project has been assisted throughout by earmarked contributions of the Government of Germany.

92. In the Dominican Republic, the Fund supported the implementation of a country-wide strategy for expanding opportunities in productive ageing.

93. The Fund's assistance at the interregional or global levels were for a comparative study on legislation affecting older persons in developing countries being carried out by the International Exchange on Ageing, Law and Ethics (EAGLE); assessment of malnutrition among older persons in developing countries by HelpAge International; developing country participation and contribution to the International Conference on Population Ageing at San Diego State University, and for long-term post-graduate training in gerontology at the International Institute on Ageing at Malta.

94. As the United Nations Trust Fund for Ageing continues to provide seed

monies for small projects, a new funding initiative is getting under way. The newly established Banyan Fund Association: A World Fund for Ageing has been exploring fund-raising options and is compiling a portfolio of project requests from all developing regions. Although it is autonomous and private, the Banyan Fund was established in 1991 under the patronage of the United Nations. It aims to: (a) inform the worldwide donor community of the needs and opportunities created by the ageing of individuals and populations; (b) support research and action-oriented projects that empower older persons to maintain independence and to contribute to society; and (c) support implementation of United Nations plans and strategies on ageing.

95. The Fund's Board and Joint Coordinating Committee plan to meet in New York in October 1992 in conjunction with the special plenary sessions on ageing.

96. As increasingly observed, older people are themselves a resource for development. The United Nations Volunteers has been tapping this resource. Retirees from public service, industry, management, professions and skilled trades comprise 6 per cent of the United Nations Volunteers roster and number about 350 serving in the field.

97. Assignments of the United Nations Volunteers for older candidates last from 3 to 12 months (instead of the more traditional 24 month service period). Assignments are likely to include: emergency/relief measures following natural or man-made disasters; technical/professional assistance on policy directions or feasibility studies; intensive training of local personnel; and small business expertise in management, marketing, product design and informatics.

98. The expertise, experience and volunteering spirit of older persons can serve societies well and, in doing so, serve themselves. Draft global target No. 6 reflects this spirit: "establish a global network of senior volunteers for social and economic development" (see A/47/339, sect. III). Expanding opportunities for older persons to continue contributing to the development of their societies in all the villages, towns and cities across the world is central to the unfolding of a new age for old age, in which older persons are agents and, when in need, beneficiaries of development.

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

99. The anniversary year is nearly over, bringing to a close the first decade of the International Plan of Action on Ageing. The next 10 years will usher in the age of ageing, a decade in which the world's population will pass through the demographic transition, emerging, in the year 2000, with an elderly population of 10 per cent (projected to increase to 20 per cent and more in subsequent decades). While demographic ageing is predicted with some certainty, timely adjustment of social and economic infrastructures is less certain and is expected to lag behind, seriously in many places. Therein lies a challenge for individual countries and the international community.

100. The first decade of the Plan of Action achieved greater awareness of the challenge of ageing and the potentialities of older persons. It saw an increase in the number and spread of activities. The anniversary year 1992 demonstrated a broad response at every level. Governments, foundations and funds, development agencies, institutes on ageing, organizations of older people, professional and trade groups and others have observed the anniversary year and helped define the global targets for the decade ahead.

101. The global targets on ageing for the year 2001 (see A/47/339) are intended to be a practical strategy for channelling the interest, energy, enthusiasm, expertise and experience of many players towards a few priority tasks. They identify a number of development activities for the decade ahead, which could include a component on ageing, thereby benefiting from a wide range of existing programmes. They assume independent initiative, willing cooperation and sharing of resources. They identify financial resources that would need to be mobilized in the course of the decade.

102. The General Assembly, in reviewing the accomplishments as well as the problems encountered during the past 10 years, may wish to endorse the global targets on ageing for the year 2001: a practical strategy (A/47/339), which will provide the framework for activities to be undertaken at the national, regional and global levels.

103. The Secretariat and the Centre on Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, as the United Nations focal point on ageing, will have a major role to play in efforts aimed at pursuing the global targets, either as an initiator or facilitator/coordinator. The extent to which it can be successful will depend, inter alia, on the resources at its disposal for the task at hand and those at the disposal of regional commissions as an essential counterpart to the focal point. Of particular importance is the level of capacity to provide technical assistance, whereby the availability of advisory services on ageing and the volume of the United Nations Trust Fund for Ageing will be key elements. Attention will have to be paid to an appropriate mix of regular budget funds and extrabudgetary resources.

Notes

1/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.92.XIII.2.

2/ ST/CSDHA/14.

3/ International Labour Organisation, 1992, ISBN: 92-108222-9.

4/ Ibid., 1991, ISBN: 92-2-107294-0.